

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 BOGOTA 03097 071531Z

43

ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

ACDA-05 PC-01 /066 W  
----- 022982

R 051844Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BOGOTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7917

INFO AMCONSUL CALI

AMCONSUL MEDELLIN

C O N F I D E N T I A L BOGOTA 3097

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS CO

SUBJ: POSSIBLE STATE OF SIEGE IN COLOMBIA

1. SUMMARY. SEVERAL EVENTS DURING THE LAST FEW DAYS HAVE RAISED THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE GOC TO THE SOCIAL DISCONTENT AND POTENTIAL FOR SUBVERSION WHICH EXIST IN COLOMBIA. ON APRIL 3 MINISTER OF GOVERNMENT CORNELIO REYES STATED THAT CONDITIONS HAD NOT REACHED A STAGE THAT WOULD NECESSITATE THE GOC TO DECLARE A STAGE OF SIEGE. NEVERTHELESS, THE MINISTER AND NATIONAL POLICE DIRECTOR HENRY GARCIA BOHORQUEZ REPEATED A HTIME FIRST RAISED BY MINISTER OF LABOR MARIA ELENA DE CROVO IN JANUARY (BOGOTA 0370) THAT THE EXTREME LEFT IS ENGAGED IN A SUBVERSIVE PLACE TO TUMBLE THE GOC, THUS INDICATING THAT A STATE OF SIEGE MIGHT BE IMPOSED IN THE NEAR FUTURE. SUCH A MOVE BY PRESIDENT LOPEZ WOULD NOT REPRESENT A SETBACK FOR THE GOC SINCE STATES OF SIEGE ARE ALMOST A COLOMBIAN TRADITION. END SUMMARY.

2. ALTHOUGH THE GOC CLAIMS TO HAVE PREVENTED A LAND INVASION IN BOGOTA SCHEDULED FOR EASTER WEEKEND (BOGOTA 3820), OTHER INVASIONS OCCURED IN THE DEPARTMENTS OF CESAR, BOLIVAR AND CHOCO. IN SEVERAL INSTANCES, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS, THE LAND INVADERS CLASHED WITH THE  
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 BOGOTA 03097 071531Z

POLICE, WHO CLAIMED THAT THE INVASIONS HAD BEEN

BACKED BY EXTREME LEFTISTS. IN TUMACO, DEPARTMENT OF NARINO, THE AUTHORITIES IMPOSED A CURFEW AND PROHIBITED THE SALE OF LIQUOR FOR SEVERAL DAYS BEGINNING MARCH 29 FOLLOWING STREET DISTURBANCES STEMMING FROM A MINOR INCIDENT. DISTURBANCES IN PASTO, THE CAPITAL OF NARINO, BROKE OUT APRIL 4, APPARENTLY IN PART AS AN EXPRESSION OF SYMPATHY BY UNIVERSITY STUDENTS WITH THE TUMACO DEMONSTRATORS.

3. IN BOGOTA, APRIL 2, KIDNAPPERS OF A 14-YEAR OLD BOY KILLED THE BOY AND THE BOGOTA COMMANDER OF THE F-2 DURING A RESCUE ATTEMPT BY THE POLICTE AUTHORITIES. EL TIEMPO, APRIL 4, CLAIMED THAT THERE HAVE BEEN 12 REPORTED KIDNAPPINGS IN 1975, SOME WITH POLITICAL MOTIVES AND OTHERS WITH RANSOM AS THE STIMULUS, ALTHOUGH THERE IS NO RPT NO CONFIRMATION OF THIS FIGURE.

4. MURDER AND LOOTING BY EXTREME LEFTIST REVOLUTIONARY GROUPS, THE MOSCOW-LINE FARC, AND PEKING AND CUBAN-LINE EPL AND ELN RESPECTIVELY, WHICH APPEARED TO BE ON THE UPSWING IN RECENT WEEKS (BOGOTA 2820) CONTINUED, ACCOMPANIED BY REPORTS OF A MEETING BETWEEN THE LEADERS OF THE THREE GROUPS AT AN UNSPECIFIED RECENT DATE ON THE BORDER AREA BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENTS OF SANTANDER AND ANTIOQUIA. SOME EMBASSY SOURCES BELIEVE THE REVOLUTIONARY GROUPS MAY HAVE STEPPED UP THEIR ACTIVITIES IN ORDER TO TEST THE WILL OF THE LOPEZ GOVERNMENT IN COMBATTING SUBVERSION.

5. FINALLY, TWO SPANISH NUNS WORKING IN BARRANCABERMEJA REPORTEDLY WILL BE DEPORTED FROM COLOMBIA FOR AGITATION AMONG THE RESIDENTS OF THIS PETROLEUM CITY. THE TENSIONS IN BARRANCA, WHICH RECENTLY WENT THROUGH A COUPLE OF CIVIC STRIKES (BOGOTA 1495) HAVE INCREASED IN THE FACE OF A POSSIBLE BREAKDOWN IN NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE STATE-OWNED PETROLEUM FIRM, ECOPETROL AND ITS LEFTIST UNION, USO. PRESIDENT LOPEZ RECENTLY NAMED A MILITARY MAN AS MAYOR OF BARRANCA.

6. THE COINCIDENCE OF THESE INCIDENTS PROMPTED THE GOC TO CALL EXTRAORDINARY SESSIONS OF BOTH THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL AND THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS APRIL 3 TO DISCUSS THE DESIRABILITY OF IMPOSING A STATE OF SIEGE. REYES' CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 BOGOTA 03097 071531Z

ANNOUNCEMENT THAT THE GOC WOULD NOT IMPOSE ARTICLE 121 OF THE CONSTITUTION (STATE OF SIEGE) PROCEEDED THE MEETINGS, THUS TAKING THE WIND OUT OF THE RUMORS THAT HAD STARTED CIRCULATING IN THE LAST SEVERAL DAYS.

7. UNDOUBTEDLY, PRESIDENT LOPEZ WILL DO ALL HE CAN TO AVOID IMPOSING A STATE OF SIEGE AT THIS TIME. SUCH A MOVE, EIGHT MONTHS INTO HIS ADMINISTRATION, COMING ON THE HEELS OF

THE USE OF ECONOMIC EMERGENCY POWERS IN OCTOBER TO  
DECREE TAX REFORM MEASURES, HE PROBABLY FEELS WOULD  
DAMAGE HIS IMAGE AND THAT OF HIS ADMINISTRATION, WHICH  
HE HAD CHARACTERIZED AS AN "EXPERIENT IN LIBERTY".  
DURING HIS INAUGURATION SPEECH LAST AUGUST (BOGOTA 7049  
AUG 8, 1974), LOPEZ SAID THAT HE WOULD TRY TO AVOID  
THE USE OF ARTICLE 121 "TO SUFFOCATE PROTEST. I DO NOT WANT,  
EXCEPT IN THE FINAL EXTREMITY TO CALL ON THE ARMED  
FORCES".

8. IN SPITE OF LOPEZ' DESIRE TO AVOID THE IMPOSITION OF  
A STATE OF SIEGE, SUCH AMOVE WILL PROBABLY BE TAKEN  
WITHIN THE NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS, PARTICULARLY IF DISTURBANCES  
AND THE GUERRILLA ACTIVITIES CONTINUE. EMBASSY SOURCES REPORT  
THAT THE POLICE AND MILITARY AUTHORITIES BELIEVE THAT PUBLIC  
ORDER IN THE COUNTRY WILL DETERIORATE UNLESS LOPEZ GIVES THEM  
THE TOLS TO MAINTAIN IT. OTHER EMBASSY SOURCES BELIEVE  
THAT HTE TEMPO OF CIVIL PROTEST AND VIOLENCE, WHILE GREATER THAN  
DURING RECENT MONTHS, REPRESENTS A CONTINUATION OF EXPRESSIONS  
OF DISORDER WHICH HAVE PLAGUED COLOMBIA FOR SEVERAL YEARS.  
THESE SOURCES ALSO CLAIM THAT THE GOC ITSELF MAY BE PUBLICIZING  
THE DISTURBANCE IN ORDER TO ESTABLISH A CLIMATE FOR A STATE  
OF SIEGE IN ANTICIPATION OF A POSSIBLE GAS PRICE HIKE THAT  
AUTHORITIES EXPECT WOULD RESULT IN SERIOUS DISTURBANCES IN  
THE MAJOR CITIES. PRESENT PASTRANA FELT OBLIGATED ON SEVERAL  
OCCASIONS TO IMPOSE STATES OF SIEGE. COLOMBIA HAS BEEN  
WITHOUT A STATE OF SIEGE ONLY SINCE DECEMBER,  
1973. THEREFORE, LOPEZ' ACTION WHEN AND IF IT COMES  
WILL NOT REPRESENT A SETBACK FOR HIM OR HIS ABILITY  
TO GOVERN.  
WHITE

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
**Capture Date:** 01 JAN 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** MARTIAL LAW, POLITICAL SITUATION, EXTREMISTS, UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 05 APR 1975  
**Decaption Date:** 01 JAN 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 28 MAY 2004  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
**Disposition Remarks:**  
**Document Number:** 1975BOGOTA03097  
**Document Source:** CORE  
**Document Unique ID:** 00  
**Drafter:** n/a  
**Enclosure:** n/a  
**Executive Order:** GS  
**Errors:** N/A  
**Film Number:** D750120-0302  
**From:** BOGOTA  
**Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Image Path:**  
**ISecure:** 1  
**Legacy Key:** link1975/newtext/t19750478/aaaactlu.tel  
**Line Count:** 145  
**Locator:** TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM  
**Office:** ACTION ARA  
**Original Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Original Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Original Previous Classification:** n/a  
**Original Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Page Count:** 3  
**Previous Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Previous Classification:** CONFIDENTIAL  
**Previous Handling Restrictions:** n/a  
**Reference:** n/a  
**Review Action:** RELEASED, APPROVED  
**Review Authority:** GolinoFR  
**Review Comment:** n/a  
**Review Content Flags:**  
**Review Date:** 16 JUN 2003  
**Review Event:**  
**Review Exemptions:** n/a  
**Review History:** RELEASED <16 JUN 2003 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <17 JUN 2003 by GolinoFR>  
**Review Markings:**

Margaret P. Grafeld  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
05 JUL 2006

**Review Media Identifier:**  
**Review Referrals:** n/a  
**Review Release Date:** n/a  
**Review Release Event:** n/a  
**Review Transfer Date:**  
**Review Withdrawn Fields:** n/a  
**Secure:** OPEN  
**Status:** NATIVE  
**Subject:** POSSIBLE STATE OF SIEGE IN COLOMBIA  
**TAGS:** PINS, CO  
**To:** STATE  
**Type:** TE  
**Markings:** Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006